

HB 607 -- PROPERTY REGULATION

SPONSOR: Basye

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Local Government by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill authorizes certain counties of the first classification to adopt property maintenance regulations and ordinances to ensure the habitability of a rented residence by requiring that it provide structural protection from the elements, access to water service, sewer service, electrical service, heat, and basic security such as locking doors and windows.

The unavailability of a utility service due to nonpayment does not count as a violation of the property maintenance code.

If a county enacts a property maintenance code, the minimum required provisions to be included in the regulations or ordinances are specified in the bill. The property maintenance code requires the county commission to create a process for selecting a designated officer to respond to written complaints of the condition of a rented residence that threaten the health or safety of the tenants. When a written complaint is filed, the owner of any rental residence must be served with a notice specifying the condition alleged in the complaint and state a reasonable date abatement of the condition must commence. If work to abate the condition does not commence as determined by the designated officer, the complaint shall be given a hearing before the county commission. If the county commission finds that the rented residence has a dangerous condition that is harmful to the health, safety, or welfare of the tenant, the county commission shall issue an order that the condition be abated. If the owner violates an order issued by the county commission the owner may be punished by a penalty, which shall not exceed a class C misdemeanor.

Upon enactment the property maintenance code provisions will apply to Boone County.

This bill is the same as HB 2336 (2020).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill as drafted provides protection for both landlords and tenants, and ensures that problems will be addressed without an unreasonable and heavy hand from the government.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Basye; Missouri Realtors; Janet Thompson, Boone County; and Dwayne Carey, Boone County Sheriff's Office.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that it is special legislation targeting only Boone County and certain residents that the county commissioners do not like.

Testifying against the bill was Arnie C. Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.